(c) The Hota Committee submitted its report on 30 July, 2004. It has made 64 main recommendations on (i) making the Civil Service responsive and citizen-friendly, transparent, accountable and ethical in its actions and interface with the people; (ii) making the Civil Service e-governance friendly; (iii) putting a premium on intellectual growth of civil servants and on upgrading their domain knowledge; (iv) protecting the Civil Service against wrongful pressure exerted by administrative superiors; political executive, business interest and other vested interests; (v) changes, if any necessary, in the various All India Services Rules and Central Civil Service Rules to provide a statutory proceedings against civil servants to decentralize the process as far as practicable, and to make the disposal of such proceedings time-bound; and (vii) matters relating to health insurance, dispute resolution etc. No decision has been taken on these recommendations by the Government.

Retirement of Employees on basis of efficiency

†3185. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are working on a scheme to retrench the Central Government Employees on the basis of their efficiency; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the basis of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) and (b) Surinder Nath Committee on the System of Performance Appraisal, Promotion, Empanelment and Placement for the All India Services and other Group 'A' Services has recommended that an effective system of screening officers should be put in place so that inservice officers who lack demonstrated competence, or who are unqualified, or of doubtful morale or financial integrity or who are in unacceptably poor health can be screened out. Officers screened out should be informed of the fact and advised that they may, if they wish, avail of a voluntary separation package. The Government is examining these recommendations.

Enactment of Freedom of Information Act, 2002

3186. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are committed to the enactment of proposed amendment to the Freedom of Information Act, 2002 towards a more transparent governance;

(b) whether this proposed amendment to the Act calls for the enforcement of penal measures like imprisonment and fines for Government officials who block information from the public domain; and

(c) whether Government would also consider legislating a 'Duty to Publish' Bill, calling upon Government to put out all Government date/ Information in the public domain without waiting for specific demands from public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) With a view to make the Right to Information Act more progressive, participatory and meaningful, Government have decided to repeal 'The Freedom of Information Act, 2002' and enact a new law in its place following which 'The Right to Information Bill, 2004' has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004.

(b) and (c) The Bill contains a provision that where a Public Information Officer has persistently failed to provide information without any reasonable cause within the specified time period, he shall be liable on conviction to fine which may extend to rupees twenty-five thousand or a term of imprisonment which may extend to five years, or with both. A provision has also been made wherein every public authority shall constantly endeavour to take steps to provide as much information *suo motu* to the public at regular intervals through various means of communications so that the public have minimum resort to the use of the contemplated Act to obtain information.

Right to Strike

3187. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some time back, the Supreme Court of India held that Government employees have no right to strike and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government have taken any action in the matter in view of the widespread opposition across the country from a cross section of the people against the ruling of the Apex Court; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir. In the judgement delivered on 6th August, 2003 in the case of